



## Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Division of Fisheries & Wildlife  
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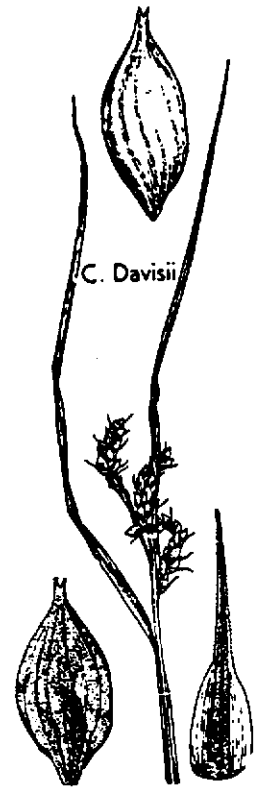
### MASSACHUSETTS ENDANGERED PLANTS

#### DAVIS'S SEDGE

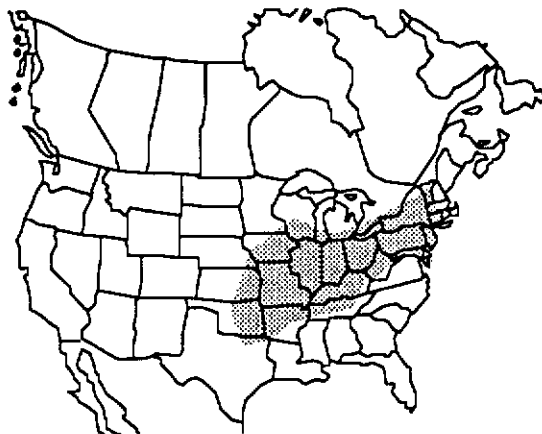
(*Carex davisii* Schwein & Torr.)

##### Description

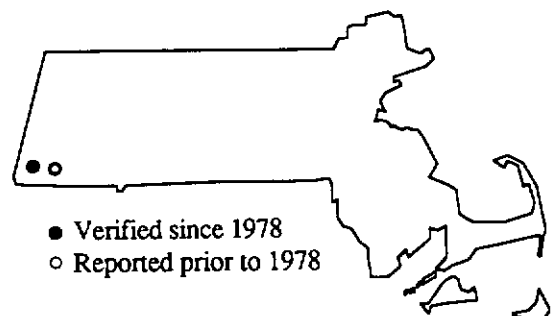
Davis's Sedge is a perennial, grass-like member of the Sedge family (Cyperaceae). The plants are purple-tinged at their bases and grow in clumps that are 3-9 dm (1 - 3 ft.) high. Principal leaf blades are pubescent, or hairy, underneath and 4-8 mm (1/6 - 1/3 in.) wide. The leaf sheaths (lowermost, clasping portions of the blades) are pubescent as well. The unisexual flowers of Davis's Sedge are much reduced and occur in spikes (unbranched, elongated clusters of stalkless flowers). The terminal spike is borne on a stalk and is pistillate (female) only toward its summit and staminate (male) below. The two to three lower spikes are entirely female. The perigynia (sac-like structures that enclose the female flower parts) are inflated, 4.5-6 mm (1/6 - 1/4 in.) long and mature to a dull orange color from early June to early July. Each perigynium is subtended by a scale that has a very long bristle or "awn."



Gleason, H.A. The New  
Britton and Brown Illustrated  
Flora of the US & Adjacent  
Canada. NY Botanical Garden,  
1952.



Documented Range of Davis's  
Sedge



Massachusetts Distribution by Town

### Range

The range of *Carex davisii* has been documented as extending from Vermont and southern Ontario to Michigan and Minnesota, south to Maryland, Tennessee, Nebraska and Texas.

### Similar Species

Handsome Sedge (*Carex formosa*) could be mistaken for Davis's Sedge. However, unlike Davis's Sedge, *C. formosa* has lateral spikes that are not entirely pistillate. Furthermore, the pistillate scales of *C. formosa* do not have long awns (slender bristles located at the top of the scales).

### Habitat in Massachusetts

*Carex davisii* is a woodland species. The one current station (discovered or re-located since 1978) in the state is a flood-plain forest with lots of deposited flotsam. Associated plant species include Green Ash (*Fraxinus pensylvanica*), Narrow-leaved Sedge (*Carex amphibola*), Poison Ivy (*Rhus radicans*), Wild Onion (*Allium canadense*), and Late Goldenrod (*Solidago gigantea*). Two rare Massachusetts plants that occur with Davis's Sedge are Gray's Sedge (*Carex grayi*) and Wild Black Currant (*Ribes americanum*). The one historical station (unverified since 1978) is an alluvial thicket. Both stations are in Berkshire county.

### Population Status

Davis's Sedge is presently listed as "Endangered" in Massachusetts, where there is one current station (discovered or relocated since 1978) and one historical station (unverified since 1978). Davis's Sedge is also considered rare in Connecticut, Minnesota, New York, Tennessee, and West Virginia. The plant was historically present in Maryland, Michigan and Vermont. It is common in the Midwest.